value of US$ 33.7 billion at 1991-92 prices and exchange rates.

(d) Export promotion is a continuous process and steps are taken to boost exports in consultation with trade, industry and other relevant interests. The Government is striving to make the environment of policies and procedures more export friendly. The measures include grant of income tax exemption on export profits, access to cheaper export credit designated in convertible currency, and assistance to Export Promotion Councils for export market development. It is expected that in the export-friendly environment provided by the Government and with the efforts of trade and industry, the targets are likely to be achieved.

PM's visit to Vietnam

2047. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister during his recent visit to Vietnam had discussed various proposals for augmenting trade and economic ties between the two countries;

(b) if so, the details of proposals and the agreements and protocols signed; and

(c) the new additional areas of trade and commerce opened up thereby?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) During PM's visit, an agreement on avoidance of Double Taxation was signed. In addition, two MOUs were proposed-one on cooperation in the mining sector and the other on cooperation in traditional medicines.

In the course of the visit, cooperation with Vietnam for setting up of power, fertiliser and agro processing projects and tie-ups for trade in agricultural commodities was proposed. Some joint venture agreements were also signed between cooperate entities on the two sides.

The Joint Working Group which was set up pursuant to a decision taken during PM's visit to Vietnam, set in New Delhi on 16-18 January 1995 and agreed on several steps for strengthening economic and commercial relations between the two countries. A number of areas of cooperation such as animal husbandary, dairying, aquaculture, food processing, sugar production, tyre manufacturing, mining, tele-communications, setting up gas- based power and fertiliser plants etc. were identified by the Joint Working Group.

Prospects for Rubber Plantation

2048. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the present production of natural rubber in India;

(b) what additional areas (in hectare) is being considered for new rubber plantation and the expected yield thereof;

(c) what is the prospect of new rubber plantation in Kerala, North Eastern States, Andaman Islands and other parts;

(d) whether Tripura is considered as a resourceful area for new rubber plantation; if so, envisaged area to be brought under rubber plantation and the expected yield thereof; and

(e) whether Government is considering development of Natural Rubber based Industries in Tripura, particularly with such end products which can be marketed in the State and/or the adjoining States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) The production of natural rubber in the country during